



**Best Start Network
Summary Notes
Friday, January 16, 2015
1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
The Waterfront Centre**

- Present:** Debbie Myers, Jodi Guilmette, Karen Davis, Lita Barrie, Brenda Bax, Judith Bishop, Chris Borst, Sabrina Brown, Jessica Bryson, Bonnie Buchanan, Andrew Debicki, Ruth Doherty, Denise Doyle, Marni Flaherty, Paula Forbes, Matt Goodman, Aisling Higgins, Sgt. Jon Alsbergas, Don Jaffray, Paul Johnson, Laura Martindale, Grace Mater, Colin McMullan, Rachelle Moore, Sherry Parsley, Lorraine Robinson, Wanda St. Francois
- Guests:** Pat Amos, Melissa Jackson, Dianne Busser, Vanessa Parlette, Jennifer Vickers-Manzin, Nancy Harrower, Joanne Rochon, Kathy Holmes, Erin, Chelsey, Cameron
- Regrets:** Dorothy Barr-Elliott, Karyn Callaghan, Karen Calligan, Shawn Chisholm, Jean Clinton, Jim Commerford, Ivana Fortino, Pauline Kajiura, Lisa Kiriakopoulos, Monique Lavallo, Laura Lukasik, Shirley McCoy, Sharon Stephanian, Cheryl Velenosi, Ruth Wells

	Agenda Item	Discussion/Decision	Action
1	Welcome/Introductions/ Review of Meeting Notes/Declaration of Conflict of Interest	<p>Debbie welcomed everyone to the meeting. Sabrina Brown is replacing Rachelle DiCrosta and representing the French Language sector and Sgt. Jonathan Alsbergas is the representative for Hamilton Police Services.</p> <p>Round-the-table introductions were made.</p> <p>There were no declarations of conflicts of interest noted.</p> <p>The following change was requested to the December meeting minutes:</p> <p>Karen Calligan had indicated that not all the videos are on the Ministry website yet but many are posted. Jean showed two of them in her presentation and there are many more. To view the videos, please visit http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/research.html</p> <p>Debbie indicated the theme of today’s meeting is ‘Young Parents’. The needs of young parents have previously been discussed. Today young parents initiatives will be highlighted.</p>	
2	The Voice of Young Parents	<p>Kathy Homes from St. Martin’s Manor (SMM) introduced Chelsey, a student who is on placement at (SMM) and Erin, young parent.</p> <p>Erin and Chelsey described the numerous roles parents play through a letter to their children.</p>	A flyer was distributed to BSN members. If interested, presentations by SMM can be provided

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		<p>Debbie thanked them for coming and setting the tone for today. She indicated that they have inspired us to do our best for everyone.</p>	<p>to other community agencies upon request.</p>
3	Nurse Family Partnership	<p>Dianne Busser, Public Health and Nancy Harrower, ASCY, presented on the Nurse Family Partnership Program (NFP).</p> <p>Dianne indicated that the expansion of the NFP is unique to Hamilton. There has been generous support for the program from the Hamilton community. The NFP is an evidence-based program with an intense Home Visiting component that begins pre-natally and continues till the child is 2. Dianne highlighted core elements of the program including the goals, eligibility criteria, program and client-centred principles.</p> <p>Nancy shared information about the enhanced NFP that is occurring in Hamilton. She reviewed funders, intended outcome and expected results and program highlights. She indicated that they are still seeking additional supports from the community, particularly following the child’s 2nd birthday when the NFP program ends as some moms may not yet feel ready to navigate services on their own. They have been able to address a number of identified gaps including increasing awareness of other community partners and have helped agencies understand the unique needs and challenges young moms face. The program has also brought together community partners that traditionally haven’t worked together.</p> <p>Nancy indicated that initially there was a community home visitor (outside of Public Health Nurses) who helped moms involved with the program to connect with appropriate services and advocated for them, involvement was voluntary. They have shifted from this community home visiting arrangement to working with the PHNs to bring parents together, creating a peer network where parents mentor each other. They have hosted special events for those involved in the NFP – active, past and those who will be graduating from the program. There are 90-100 parents involved in the NFP currently. They are in the process of developing a healthy food cupboard and are conducting an evaluation of the program and obtaining parent input. Graduate parents are conducting interviews with current parents to support this process.</p> <p>Dianne shared both successes and challenges of the program. They are fortunate to have professional consultation with Dr. David Olds, founder of the program. A special thank you was extended to the Hamilton Community Foundation, a funder of the program. Funding is time-limited and they are investigating ways to sustain the program with the community.</p>	<p>Please see the attached presentation slides for additional information. If you have any questions regarding the program, please feel free to contact Dianne.</p>

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		<p>Currently there are 6 moms on the wait list. The approximate waiting time is 6 weeks.</p> <p>Nancy stated the aim of the program is to get them to use mainstream services (i.e.: OEYCs, PFLCs, libraries, etc.).</p> <p>Marni encouraged the program to consider connecting the moms with child care centres in high schools and Licensed Home Child Care Agencies as a way of supporting them in continuing with their education or employment.</p>	
4	Learning, Earning & Parenting (LEAP)	<p>Brenda Bax, City of Hamilton, provided an overview of the Learning, Earning and Parenting Program (LEAP). The program is geared to young parents between 16 and 25 years. The program has 4 staff with an average caseload of 200 – 250 parents. A lot of parents involved with the program continue on to post-secondary education or additional programming through Ontario Works.</p> <p>Based on community input, they amended the wait list to access child care subsidy for young parents so they have immediate access to child care subsidy. Many graduates of the program have been able to secure employment; one former student even worked at the City. One of the greatest challenges for program participants is when their personal support system (i.e.: parent, spouse, etc.) does not support or value what they are doing. The program is very flexible and has an individualized client-centred approach. They understand many clients have competing priorities such as completion of assignments for school, sick child, etc. The program offers support with these types of issues as well as housing, abusive relationships, transportation, etc.</p> <p>Brenda spoke about research in regard to the adolescent brain and how the brain is still under development.</p> <p>Lita shared information on a program at the Hamilton Public Library which allows young parents to borrow fewer items through a new access card program whereby fines are not accrued on the card. E-books can also be downloaded.</p>	<p>Please see the attached presentation slides with a link to a video on brain development in adolescents.</p> <p>Lita will provide Brenda with more information on the new access card program for young parents.</p>
5	St. Martin’s Manor	<p>Paula Forbes shared information regarding the programs and services provided by St. Martin’s Manor, Angela’s Place (including the Jeanne Scott Parent and Child Centre) and Grace Haven including the vision, successes and challenges.</p> <p>System navigation is an issue for many moms. They also feel a sense of stigma and judged by others. The vision is to provide support to the young moms to navigate the system.</p>	<p>Please see the attached presentation slides for additional information.</p>

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		<p>Pat commented that it is very tragic that the programs servicing the young moms are not being fully recognized for the work they do in the area of mental health. She indicated we need to look at ways we can obtain support from the Ministries. It is important to invest in the most vulnerable. We know investing in early learning is critical and we need to invest in mental health in the same way. There are many organizations that are doing good work in this area, however, we need to look at sustainability and how we can ensure programs and services continue beyond the life of project dollars. Pat suggested using the evidence to inform and to capture the stories of the young moms as a means of harnessing support.</p> <p>Paula indicated they do belong to a provincial network – Young Parent Infant Mental Health Association - and are planning to develop and present a case plan to the Minister.</p> <p>Denise indicated that the YWCA received some funding to establish a Women’s Health Network through Women’s College. There are also young women in the community who need access to information and supports around eating disorders.</p> <p>Judith stated there is a Mental Health Leader appointed in this community who may be an avenue to advocate.</p>	
6	Healthy Birth Weight Coalition	<p>Jennifer Vickers-Manzin and Vanessa Parlette, City of Hamilton, presented on the Healthy Birth Weight Coalition. A thank you was extended to Grace and Paul who helped develop the Coalition in 2012. The Coalition, a strategy targetted to the lower city related to lower birth weights, was in response to the Code Red series in the Hamilton Spectator.</p> <p>Low-birth weights has been a long term issue in Hamilton. The target priorities weren’t young parents initially, however, the same neighbourhoods had high rates of smoking and teen pregnancy. The Coalition whose goal is to build a community of support around women is taking a city-wide approach. One area of focus is teen pregnancy prevention. Often teens choose to become pregnant, and biologically, they haven’t developed fully and have other high risk factors.</p> <p>There are 30 organizations and an Advisory Body involved with the Coalition. There are 3 main action groups: Care Pathway Action Team, Professional Education Action Team and Smoking Cessation Action Group.</p> <p>The Young Parent Care Pathway looks at what steps we need to take to ensure young parents get the best care recognizing there is diversity in where they start and that every door is the right door. There are common tools and practices to support an integrated</p>	<p>Please see the attached presentation slides for additional information.</p> <p>If your agency is interested in a presentation, please let Jennifer or Vanessa know as they are currently in the process of scheduling community presentations.</p>

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		<p>approach and an online navigation tool to identify what supports are available. The tool then guides the parent through a decision-by-decision process (i.e.: housing, child care, etc.) which would be helpful for service providers to walk through with young parents or for the parents to complete on their own.</p> <p>The successes, challenges and work currently happening to move towards an integrated system were highlighted. There is a great deal of work being completed on care pathways and they are trying to marry these with other pathways that are being developed such as the warm transfer protocol. They are planning to pilot a test tool in April 2015.</p> <p>Lita mentioned that many youth rely on Wifi and computers and this could be an avenue to explore with the use of a passport, Face book, etc. This has been very successful in the library.</p> <p>Many young parents do not have data on their phones so they go to the library to access it.</p> <p>Debbie thanked all of the presenters for sharing their important information with the Network today. When reflecting on the vision of Best Start, particularly our vision of strengthening partnerships and enhancing the integration of all community supports for children and their families, the presentations which we heard today were timely. She asked members to reflect about their organizations and how we can move forward in strengthening connections for the benefit of young parents. School Boards are an important part of supporting young parents and it will be key to have them here as part of the discussions.</p>	<p>Please share any comments with Jodi that can be discussed at the Co-ordinating Committee.</p>
7	Other Business	<p>On behalf of the BSN, Paul Johnson acknowledged Pat Amos who recently retired as Director of the HWCDSB. She has had a distinguished career of public service and we wanted to take this opportunity to recognize her involvement with the Best Start Network, particularly in the early days when Hamilton was designated a demonstration community. Pat worked alongside us in developing this collaborative model through the challenging times. When looking for space, Pat went into the auto shop at St. David’s and asked how are we going to transform this space into an OEYC. Pat found a way to protect the space and it was an opportunity to showcase how this can occur in a school. When Schools First came to light where schools were considered the focus, Pat recognized that Kiwanis was the hub in the east end of Hamilton and with courage and quiet leadership, she worked with the Public Board and they stated we need to do the right thing and continue with Kiwanis as the hub in that part of the city. The St. Helen Centre @t McQuesten was an asset of the</p>	

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		<p>Catholic School Board which has now become a community asset. Paul presented Pat with the Best Start plaque and flowers in token of our appreciation of her leadership.</p> <p>Pat thanked Paul for his kind comments and the Network and commented that the voice of Hamilton is highly respected throughout the province. It isn't all communities where leaders in the city can pick up the phone and talk to each other. She left us with three challenges:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We are at a critical juncture. This will be the first year that the first group of FDKs will go through the grade 3 testing. She isn't convinced FDK is working due to large classroom sizes – what is the evidence that it is working? What is the return from the investment? 2. Powerful work is being conducted in our city. We need to consider ways of linking the various projects and initiatives. 3. Suggested bringing the mental health leads from the 4 School Boards to the BSN to discuss the issue and how we can work together to truly have an impact. 	
8	Adjourned	<p>Please note: Next Meeting is scheduled for: Friday, February 20, 2015 The Waterfront Centre (555 Bay St., Hamilton, ON) 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.</p>	